

Small Business Notes

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As more businesses reopen, employers are taking health precautions for workers and customers that often include the regular and frequent use of hand sanitizers in the workplace. These sanitizers are most often alcohol based with either ethanol or isopropyl alcohol as the main ingredient. On July 5, 2020, the CDC issued a Health Advisory to clinicians and the general public about the danger of methanol based hand sanitizers. Repeated use of these products can result in blindness or death. The degree of tolerance is not known, so the products should be avoided completely.

Signs and symptoms of methanol poisoning include headache, abdominal pain, loss of coordination, a decreased level of consciousness. In the past, warnings about poisoning was focused almost exclusively on the dangers of drinking methanol or the dangers of repeated exposure in large amounts in industrial settings. The use of hand sanitizers in the wake of COVID-19 has prompted the extension of the warnings to personal, topical use.

The Food and Drug Administration has published a list of those methanol based sanitizers and their manufacturers with whom it is working to recall product. See [FDA Updates on Hand Sanitizers with Methanol](#).

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